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Note verbale dated 30 March 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to transmit the summary report of the workshop entitled "Sustainable forest management: designing the vehicles for securing the means of implementation", a major group-led initiative in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests, held in Kathmandu from 2 to 6 March 2015 (see annex).**

The Permanent Mission would appreciate it if the present note and the report were issued as a document of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

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** The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 30 March 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Sustainable forest management: Designing the vehicles for securing the means of implementation

Summary report of the Major Groups-Led Initiative in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2-6 March 2015

Summary

Major Groups play a critical role within the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), both in contributing to policy formulation and in the implementation of UNFF decisions at regional, national and local levels. Engaging Major Groups effectively is therefore key to the success of the work of UNFF, and the achievement of the 4 Global Objectives on Forests (GOF's) stated in the Non-legally Binding Instrument on all Types of Forests (NLBI) adopted by the seventh session of UNFF (UNFF7).

In March 2015, a global workshop of the Major Groups-Led Initiative in support of the UNFF was hosted by the Government of Nepal. The objective was to develop concrete recommendations for the eleventh session of the UNFF11. The workshop was made possible through financial contributions from the Federal Government of Germany, as well as the support of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

In approaching the overall theme of "Sustainable forest management: Designing the vehicles for securing the means of implementation", participants heard presentations on a number of case studies, and focused their discussions on three topics: the new United Nations body for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM); financial mechanisms for undertaking SFM; and enhancing the engagement of Major Groups participation in the UNFF process. Based on the workshop discussions, key recommendations were developed for presentation to UNFF11 in May 2015.

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Background and context

1. Since the establishment of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), Major Groups have played pivotal roles in the global policy debates while also working directly at the grassroots level in the areas of conservation and sustainable forest management.

2. The engagement of some Major Groups (MGs) at the global policy level has provided a unique opportunity for them to create awareness of policy decisions and their implications, as well as support the drive for implementation among peers at the grassroots level. Building these partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaborations, both from the ground up and from policies down, is vital in the goal to achieve the global objectives and national policy measures as expressed in the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI).

3. During UNFF8 in 2009, governments passed a resolution that stressed the importance of Major Groups involvement in the UNFF process and called for their active support in enhancing their involvement. In line with this priority, UNFF Major Groups on two occasions jointly organized Global Workshops in support of UNFF to develop policy recommendations for UNFF9 in 2010 and UNFF10 in 2013. These workshops were hosted by the governments of Ghana and Brazil respectively. Major Groups also founded an international body called the Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPoF), registered in Ottawa, Canada, to coordinate their activities and to enhance their contribution to UNFF global policy formulation and implementation.

4. The workshop held in Nepal in from 2-6 March 2015 was the third in the series of Global Workshops to contribute to the UNFF process. It was made possible through the generous financial contribution from the Government of Germany with support from the Government of Nepal, ITTO and the UNFF Secretariat.

5. In developing their recommendations to address the theme of UNFF11, Major Groups adopted the following theme for their 2015 workshop, "Sustainable forest management: Designing the vehicles for securing the means of implementation." Participants heard presentations on a number of case studies, and focused their discussions on three topics: the new United Nations body for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM); financial mechanisms for undertaking SFM; and enhancing the engagement of Major Groups participation in the UNFF process.

6. The working groups' work thus served as the basis for development of Major Group recommendations for UNFF11. It also served as the basis for a communiqué that was issued to participants and to media at the end of the workshop.

Organizational matters

Venue and duration of the workshop

7. The Major Groups-Led Initiative took place at the Park Village Hotel in Kathmandu, Nepal from 2-6 March 2015.

Attendance and participation

8. The workshop was attended by 76 participants from 36 countries representing the following 8 of the 9 official Major Groups identified by the United Nations: Children and Youth; Farmers and Small Forests Landowners; Indigenous Peoples;

Local Authorities; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); Scientific and Technological community; Women; and Wood Workers and Trade Unions. Representatives of the ninth UN Major Group on Business and Industry were not present.

Central objective

9. The overarching goal of the workshop was to enhance the implementation of UNFF decisions toward sustainable forest management within the framework of establishing a successor institution with the means for future policy development and implementation. The central objective was to develop concrete recommendations for UNFF11, to be held in New York from 4-15 May 2015.

Opening ceremony

10. The opening ceremony took place on the morning of Monday, 2 March 2015. Guest speakers at the opening ceremony included:

- Mr. Lambert Okrah, President of the Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPoF)
- Dr. Manoel Sobral Filho, Director, UNFF Secretariat
- The Hon. Mahesh Acharya, Minister of Forests and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal

11. As Co-Chairs of the opening ceremony, Mr. Krishna Acharya, UNFF Focal Point for Nepal, and Mr. Ghan Shyam Pandey, UNFF Focal Point for Framers and Small Forest Landowners, made their acceptance remarks by welcoming the participants to Nepal and listed the 8 Major Groups (MGs) in attendance. They encouraged everyone to explore their country of Nepal, and to experience its rich biodiversity, culture, wilderness and beauty. They stressed the importance of the opportunity to strengthen the future of forest management and to develop concrete ideas and recommendations on how to save our forests not just for ourselves, but for future generations.

12. On behalf of the Organizing Committee, Mr. Lambert Okrah welcomed all participants to the workshop. Mr. Okrah expressed sincere appreciation to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal for accepting to host the workshop, and to both Mr. Acharya and Mr. Pandey who played important roles in making the event possible. He also expressed deep gratitude for the financial contributions from the Federal Government of Germany, as well as for the support of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the UNFF Secretariat. Mr. Okrah cited the vital importance of the role of MGs in the work of the United Nations, and in the UNFF. He reminded participants that UNFF11 marks the end of the mandate of the current UNFF. As such, this MGI Workshop provides a unique opportunity to build on the gains made to date; to re-shape and create a new robust institution that can deal with the challenges of SFM of our time; and to address the fractured and fragmented discussions as well as the deforestation and forest degradation that has continued during the UNFF's tenure. Mr. Okrah emphasized that the three sub-themes of the workshop will be to consider issues relating to a new institution to replace the old one; to discuss the financial mechanisms and mode for securing technology transfer for SFM; and to establish modalities for enhancing the participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders. He stressed that UNFF11 is

the period to re-build, re-name and re-launch a new UN body on forests that has the capacity to both review policies and facilitate implementation. He closed with a call to participants to bring concrete, creative recommendations to UNFF11 that really define what MGs truly value, and showcase what MGs can contribute to the process.

13. In his official opening address, the Honourable Minister Mahesh Acharya welcomed participants on behalf of the Government of Nepal. He stressed that the forests, which occupy not only 40% of Nepal's land area, but also provide vital goods and services, are a very important resource for his country. Forests are the esteemed natural wealth of human beings, and humans are both the major consumer and saviour of its resources. They are not only the means for survival, but also a major player for the economic prosperity of the millions of poor people who live in the vicinity of forests, and of Nepal as a country. He shared several national initiatives of the Government of Nepal, including successful Community Forest programmes that have been recognized at the global level, and a new Forest Policy endorsed in 2015 for the effective and sustainable management of forests. Mr. Acharya expressed his confidence that the workshop will identify key areas of achievements, convergences and differences with regards to the current international arrangements on forests, and that the participants will develop concrete recommendations for UNFF11.

14. Dr. Manoel Sobral Filho gave the MGI Workshop's keynote address. He expressed appreciation for Nepal as a leading example of the achievements and continuing challenges of community-based forest management and its contributions to improved forest conditions, greater forest cover, increased economic benefits, social mobilization and the institutionalization of democracy at the grassroots level. Dr. Sobral highlighted the critical advocacy role civil society organizations have in influencing the public and legitimizing global forest-related decisions, and that for this reason, the UNFF has a long standing tradition of openness and transparency in its working modalities to provide opportunities for active civil society stakeholders to participate and present their views on all aspects of SFM policy and practices. He stressed the importance of forests, citing that 80% of humanity depends on the survival of forests that provide fiber, fuel, filter water for crops, maintain the soil and help to stabilize global warming. He also reminded participants that the regenerative aspects of forests make them a far better investment than the unsustainable, non-biodegradable products society are addicted to, like plastics.

15. Dr. Sobral then focused on the UN agenda around forests. He underscored that forests, for the first time, are featured highly in the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 UN Development Agenda. He encouraged participants to consider 5 key needs during their deliberations:

- To mainstream forests by recognizing and showcasing how crucial they are, at all levels of development.
- The importance of highlighting the security of forests, including a call to governments to effectively address illegal deforestation.
- To include the private sector in recommendations to mobilize financing for SFM, and to recognize that any funding will have to compete with other urgent issues, like health, particularly in developing countries.
- To create good governance systems to effectively mobilize resources.

- For a coherent institution on forests at the global level, to build on the work of the UNFF whose mandate is coming to an end.

16. He stressed that the issue of a legally or non-legally binding agreement on forests should not be a priority discussion point. What's needed is a strong commitment from and the deep political will of governments not just to discuss and to plan, but to take action, regardless of whether an agreement is legally-binding or not. He also underscored the need for financing, and to increase the competiveness of the forest sector to access existing funds. Without these two essential changes, it will be business as usual. In closing, Dr. Sobral made an enthusiastic call to participants to develop quality materials and specific recommendations that will contribute significantly to UNFF11 discussions and shape SFM in the post-2015 UN Development Agenda.

Sustainable forest management: Designing the vehicles for securing the means of implementation

Overview presentations

17. Two presentations provided an overview of background information and context for participants regarding the UNFF processes to date.

1. Overview of the review process of UN Forum on Forests presentation on the review process, by Ms. Njeri Kariuki, UNFF Secretariat

18. Ms. Kariuki set the stage for all participants by reminding them that UN Member States will be reviewing the effectiveness of the International Agreement on Forests (IAF) at the upcoming UNFF11, and will decide on the future of the IAF arrangement beyond 2015. UNFF11's overall theme of "Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward for the IAF" will include a review of the effectiveness of the IAF, the progress achieved towards the global objectives on forests, and the contribution of forests and the IAF to internationally agreed development goals. It will focus on the past performance of the UNFF and its processes, the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (Forest Instrument), the UNFF Secretariat, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and the UNFF within the context of the UN Sustainable Development Framework, including the outcome of Rio+20 and the post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Ms. Kariuki explained that, in view of the above, a number of activities have been organized in preparation for UNFF11. These include an independent assessment, intergovernmental ad hoc expert groups 1&2 (AHEG 1&2) on the IAF, Country-Led Initiatives in support of the UNFF in China and Switzerland, and this Major Groups-Led Initiative in support of UNFF. The outcomes, conclusions and recommendations from all of these intersessional activities will be submitted to UNFF11 as inputs for consideration.

2. Food and Agriculture Organization presentation on Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), by Mr. Jeff Campbell, FAO

19. Mr. Campbell provided an overview of the history, objectives and structure of the CPF as well as a comprehensive analysis of its achievements and challenges to date and a vision for the future. He emphasized that the CPF's mission remains valid but, as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be central to the future International Agreement on Forests (IAF), the CPF will require a stronger focus on

the post-2015 development agenda in its mission and objectives as well as the consistent and strong engagement of individual CPF member organizations. Amended future objectives will include supporting the work of UNFF and its member countries as well as other inter-governmental processes related to forests and the post-2015 development agenda; and enhancing cooperation and coordination on forest issues. Mr. Campbell also underscored the important role of Major Groups and other non-governmental stakeholders in achieving sustainable forest management (SFM) and the need for the CPF to enhance the engagement of Major Groups, particularly in specific activities based on CPF priority actions at the regional and national levels.

Presentation of case studies

20. Five case studies were prepared and presented in order to inform and stimulate discussions. Full case study texts are available for download from the workshop website: www.mgp-forests.org.

1. The institutional framework of an independent UN institution: The case of International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), by Mr. Steve Johnson, ITTO

21. After first clarifying that the ITTO is, in fact, not a UN institution but rather an intergovernmental organization that works with, but outside of, the UN system, Mr. Johnson gave a comprehensive overview of its core priorities, institutional structure, membership, funding, objectives, action plans, achievements and challenges. He stressed that the ITTO's core priority is to promote the conservation, sustainable management, use and trade of tropical timber and non-timber forest products. He also underscored the ITTO's fundamental concept that consumers and producers are equal, and how the organization has structured itself to give equal weight to both groups in terms of voting rights as well as the equal sharing of the results, resources and outcomes.

22. During a lively discussion in plenary after the case study was presented, several cautionary points of interest to Major Groups and the objectives of this workshop were raised, including:

a) the danger of establishing new funds in statutory language without either confirmed donor support or a realistic vision of where the money will come from

b) the importance of full-time, permanent, paid staff at the Secretariat of the new UN body on forests to ensure motivation, consistency and momentum

c) the need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the perceptions of other agencies when setting up new mechanisms and structures, particularly around funding

d) the risks of putting dates on goals, particularly on international objectives that can only be achieved and measured at the national level. Measurable progress over time leads to credibility and trust, whereas missing a single objective by a specific date undermines all such progress.

2. The institutional framework of an ECOSOC institution: The case of UNFF, by Mr. Mafa Evaristus Chipeta, independent policy consultant

23. The case study gave an analysis of the current situation of the International Agreement on Forests (IAF), as UNFF, including its achievements in maintaining momentum on post-Rio forests dialogue and the development of many resolutions and proposed actions, but resulting in little implementation; a Secretariat low in the UN hierarchy with few staff and over half of its budget being voluntary or extra-budgetary; a voluntary Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) that is not coordinated in countries; an inability to mobilize adequate sustained funding for SFM implementation; the constraints of having UNFF under ECOSOC, particularly in diminishing effective convening power and implementation; and the focus of UNFF on foresters with limited links to other sectors and processes.

24. Recommendations for alternative, desirable attributes for a new body on forests include: maintaining the established, successful dialogue processes; adding and prioritizing implementation of proposed actions and resolutions that arise from such dialogue; developing a focused, strategic plan; building partnerships at the regional level; using country-led initiatives (CLIs), organization-led initiatives (OLIs), major group initiatives (MGIs) and regional-led initiatives (RLIs) to promote action; and broadening the focus beyond the forestry sector.

25. Mr. Chipeta provided four possible options for a post-UNFF process: to keep the new body under ECOSOC but with adaptations; to keep it within the UN but move it to an operational agency such as UNDP, FAO or ITTO; to keep the policy forum under ECOSOC but build and move implementation to elsewhere within the UN; or to move outside the UN and tailor-make a new implementation-focused institution. He then gave a list of benefits and challenges for each of the four options.

26. In closing, it was emphasized that, irrespective of the chosen option, to make the IAF effective: governments must prove their political commitment with higher forestry budgets and investment incentives, and accept responsibility for their implementation; institutions for economic, environmental and social roles of forests must be unified and harmonized; country-level initiatives must be coordinated and not focus exclusively on bilateral dealings with external development partners; effective IAF Focal Points need to be designated; and donors in countries must respect the Paris Declaration principles on aid harmony and coordination.

3. Targeting international funding mechanisms towards funding sustainable forest management (SFM), presented by Mr. Prajual Karki, MGPoF

27. The case study explored the need for funding SFM to meet the direct costs of forest management, to fulfill the gap of economic benefit, to prevent non-sustainable activities of forest products, to save our environment, and to build capacity for SFM. The presentation explained the categories of funding available for financing forestry activities. The presentation categorized them as follows: national and public, national and private, international and public, and international and private, key points stressed regarding SFM funding include: the ODA is the core of international public sector finance; bilateral funds depend on donor policies; SFM is a long term minimum return, high capital investment process; and a general lack of knowledge of the effects of deforestation results in SFM investment not being a priority of funders. It is vital to promote private sector participation in SFM, to

compensate for short term costs; to provide subsidies to the capital investment; and that active participation of member-led initiatives be supported.

4. The institutional arrangement between an NGO focal organization and a UN body: The case of Climate Action Network International (CAN) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), by Dr. Christian Holz, independent research consultant

28. The case study outlined eight specific policy recommendations, based on lessons learned from CAN's involvement in the UNFCCC process. These recommendations fell into two categories: relationships between observer organizations and UN bodies; and internal organization of the observer network or partnership. In the first category, recommendations included: to establish and maintain an expectation for, and a record of, clear and transparent decision making by the UN body with regards to observer engagement; to demand and defend a status of observer interventions and submissions that is, as far as possible, identical to those of Parties; and to cultivate relationships with Parties which are genuinely interested in effective stakeholder participation. With regards to internal organization of MG networks, recommendations included: being mindful of imbalances in participation in internal deliberations and plan specific steps to overcome these barriers; select a specific, and explicit, mode for consensus in decision-making on internal and external documents; break large, complex topics into manageable sub-areas; ensure participants in collective decision-making or policy formulation are aware of the anticipated timelines and means in which to contribute to the process; and remain vigilant about both the benefits and potential negative impacts of virtual communications.

5. Strengthening the mechanisms of Major Groups' engagement with UN Bodies towards sustainable forest management, presented by Mr. Lambert Okrah, President, MGPoF

29. Mr. Okrah gave a brief historical account of the institutionalization of Major Groups' (MGs) engagement within the UN since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and underscored the general understanding that the UN system functions better when the engagement of MGs is enhanced and adequately supported. The presentation made reference to a report (E/CN.17/2013/2) presented at the 20th session of Commission on Sustainable Development on the subject and highlighted the following recommendations from that report: UN to enhance MG participation focused on the establishment of criteria for creating new MGs; enhanced coherence among all UN bodies that deal with MGs; establishing links between the local, regional and global levels; more participation of social movements; the involvement of civil society on expert panels; and the establishment of better administrative support for MGs. Recommendations for MGs included increased structure in MG governance; establishing minimum standards for MG statements; strengthening and supporting the MG on non-governmental organizations; and prioritizing the engagement of people on the front lines. Recommendations for Member States included establishing adequate and predictable funding for MGs; re-establishing multi-stakeholder dialogues; and holding open consultations with public interest.

30. The case study also reviewed the engagement of MGs in UNFF, including both achievements to date and constraints and challenges faced by MGs within the ECOSOC and UNFF structures. The evolution of MG engagement within UNFF

since 2009 was highlighted, from the establishment of the Major Groups Partnership on Forests, to the development of joint papers, to the organization of Major Groups-Led Initiative workshops in support of UNFF, and the successful raising of funds and collaboration from certain governments and international organizations.

Participant discussions and recommendations

31. Participants joined one of three discussion groups. Each group had a facilitator and five guiding questions. All groups worked on each of the three following discussion topics: the new United Nations body for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM); financial mechanisms for undertaking SFM; and enhancing the engagement of Major Groups participation in the UNFF process. All groups were tasked with developing concrete recommendations directed towards the work of the eleventh session of the UNFF. Recommendations were discussed in plenary. Participants then joined one of three working groups, each assigned to focus on one of the three discussion topics. Each working groups was tasked to review, synthesize and refine all of the recommendations made from the previous three discussion groups and to present their consolidated reports to the plenary for final discussion and input.

1. Topic 1: The new United Nations body for sustainable forest management (SFM)

Guiding questions

32. The following five questions were posed to guide discussions:

a) Why do we need an effective UN body on forests?

b) Why is the current one not effective?

c) What are the good elements of the current one?

d) What conclusions can you draw from your understanding of the current IAF on its institutional and operational systems?

e) What suggestions do you have for the structure and operation of the new body to make the new UN body effective?

Narrative summary and highlights

33. Participants highlighted many reasons to have an effective UN body on forests including: a pressing need to raise the profile of forests to the highest level in the global arena and to clearly articulate the importance of forests; to have an effective platform to work with, and ensure that, governments are active, accountable and transparent in their national commitments around SFM; to bring synergy to address the fragmentation and conflicts between different UN Agencies, Parties and bodies involved in forest-related issues; to bring a holistic approach that mobilizes not just governments, but the MGs that disseminate policies on the ground; to facilitate the implementation of over 270 recommendations that have been identified and agreed upon to date through the UNFF process; and to ensure the interests and rights of all Major Groups as well as all people who "live in it, with it and depend on it" are safeguarded.

34. Participants noted the following concerns and limitations of the current UNFF process: due, in large part, of the UNFF being hosted within ECOSOC, it has been solely a dialogue-based process without the capacity to take dialogue to

implementation; the subsequent lack of decision-making power as well as the high level of bureaucracy and hierarchy has resulted in the UNFF being unable to reach a high level profile forum status; a lack of commitment and political will from Member States on SFM, in part due to other perceived priorities such as climate change; minimal success in centralizing discussions and actions on forest issues which are often discussed outside of UNFF on other platforms or at other UN bodies; the absence of specific targets and indicators for the global objective on forests; the limited resources to ensure robust MG participation despite its Agenda 21 commitments; and a bias towards the economic valuation aspects for forests with minimal consideration of the social, ecological and cultural benefits and challenges of forests.

35. Benefits and achievements of the UNFF recognized by participants included: as an intergovernmental platform, all governments are members of UNFF; over 270 recommendations have been developed and agreed upon; it has been a driving point for international forest policy dialogue, and has raised the attention of the international community to forest-related issues through the establishment of both the International Year of Forests (2011) and the International Day of Forests (March 21); through the CPF, it has helped develop tools for SFM including FAO's National Forest Program, IUFRO's Climate Action Plan and specific criteria and indicators developed by the ITTO; and, compared to many other UN bodies, the UNFF is much more open to MG participation, including a staff liaison at the Secretariat who not only is available as a direct contact for MGs, but who is able to link MGs with policy makers.

Conclusions

36. After weighing achievements, constraints and needs, participants made the following conclusions:

a) The UNFF's placement within ECOSOC has led to a rich dialogue that resulted in more than 270 recommendations, but it does not provide scope or capacity for implementation. The present hierarchy and complexity within ECOSOC at the divisional level hinders decision-making as bureaucracy is very high. MGs want to see more focus on implementation of the forest instrument and goals on forests.

b) There is a lack of ownership of UNFF recommendations, as seen in some of the language used that asks Parties to "consider" and "encourage" but does not call on Parties to "commit". With clauses of "national limitations and territorial sovereignty" the Parties are more reluctant to take on recommendations that might be too ambitious.

c) Any new UN Body on forests still needs to be part of the UN system so as to ensure full governmental participation and to retain access to processes that are often exclusive.

Recommendations

37. The following recommendations were made:

a) MGs propose a new multi-stakeholder UN Forest Organization, not under ECOSOC, that addresses both policy and implementation, and that will deal with

forestry issues in a coordinated and holistic manner at the global, regional, national and local levels.

b) The issue of forests is included in several of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, goals 6, 15 and 17). The new UN body on forests should be responsible for the high political level dialogue on SDGs on forest related issues, including the review of policies and the establishment of dedicated funds to implement its work on the ground. The new body should also be responsible for coordinating all institutions and mechanisms engaged on forest issues within the UN, and to bring synergies between different agencies and stakeholders.

c) The new UN body on forests must meet more regularly than bi-annually, and/or must have specific working groups that both keep momentum going on agreed upon issues, and address key emerging issues.

d) Given that current funding for forests is largely within UN funds tied to the climate sector, the new UN body for forests must have a stronger role in providing input into the use of these funds.

e) While recognizing that such a change may lead to slower agreements from the Parties, MGs propose that forest recommendations need to be legally binding so that there will be a compulsory mechanism to push governments to adopt, and act upon, recommendations already made by the UNFF as well as future recommendations developed by the new UN body on forests.

f) MGs need to be part of the governing structure of the new UN body on forests.

g) The new UN body for forests should serve as the coordinating body of CPF.

2. Topic 2: Financial mechanisms for undertaking sustainable forest management (SFM)

Guiding questions

38. The following five questions were posed to guide discussions:

a) What is the MG perspective on the nature of funding for SFM?

b) What are the existing financial mechanisms for SFM? And what can be done to attract the needed funds for SFM?

c) How can the understanding of the value of the goods and services from forests (complete forest valuation) contribute to SFM?

d) What conclusions can you draw from current funding mechanisms?

e) What suggestions do you have to target funding mechanisms for SFM?

Narrative summary and highlights

39. When discussing the nature of funding for SFM, MG participants highlighted that funding for forest issues is inadequate for the issues at hand. Instead, global funding priorities are focused outside of forests on issues such as climate change, food security and economic growth. They also noted that funding is currently fragmented; that the few funding sources and mechanisms that are available are difficult to access due to bureaucracy, complex application processes and a lack of

transparency; and that there is a need to explore untapped and alternative funding sources, both from outside of the forest sector and from emerging areas of funding opportunities such as REDD+ and various sectors related to SDGs, both at the international and national levels. They also stated that there needs to be a comprehensive valuation of financial mechanisms including a full economic valuation of all ecosystem services and funding sources that take a wider perspective on forest values; as well as a full economic valuation of in-kind contributions to SFM from stakeholders such as communities, Indigenous Peoples and smallholders.

40. Participants noted that there are mechanisms for funding at many different levels that address the issues of forests, including multi-lateral UN funding, bilateral funding, national funding and private sector funding. They highlighted that these are still insufficient to support SFM, and that there is not one general mechanism at the international level that specifically supports implementation processes for SFM. While a Global Forest Fund has been discussed in the UNFF processes, there has been a lack of political will from governments to support the initiative. Concerns were also raised that private company funding often invest in businesses that can be counter-productive to SFM (e.g. oil palm plantations, gold mining etc.)

41. Participants underscored the need to attract new and additional funds for SFM and for strong political will of Member States to prioritize SFM. Initiatives that would support both objectives include: improved forest governance at the community level and in forest institutions; clear and transparent mechanisms for fund allocation; enhanced engagement of MGs in fora, such as the World Business Forum, where they can advocate for direct funding to forests; the development of clear communication advocacy strategies and best practices; capacity building of MGs and community groups on how to fill out complex funding applications; and linking forest initiatives and SFM to climate change, food security and other issues for which significant funds exist. Additional suggestions included performance-based payments and the development of national roadmaps for SFM.

42. Participants stressed that a complete forest valuation must recognize that forests, and the ecosystems they form, comprise a rich wealth of natural capital that sustains both life and economic activity. While there is common understanding, appreciation and measurements for the value of timber, forest carbon and some ecosystem services such as water and eco-tourism, current methodologies that value forests do not give measurable significance to a range of other forest goods and benefits, such as non-timber forest products, food, extractives, pollution control, pollination, watersheds, wind breaks, the nutrient cycle etc. The interdependence and benefits of social, cultural and spiritual connections with forests have also not been sufficiently considered in forest valuation.

Conclusions

43. After reviewing the nature of funding, existing financial mechanisms and their understanding of complete forest valuation, participants made the following conclusions:

a) The lack and inconsistencies of funding mechanisms reflect the lack of political willingness among the governments to prioritize SFM. As a result, funding for SFM is not only extremely fragmented, but the existing funding mechanisms

emphasize more on the economic value and less on the conservation, cultural and social value of forests.

b) A large proportion of existing funds have been spent in bureaucratic processes, leaving less funds available for the implementation of SFM. This makes it difficult for communities to get fair compensation for their efforts in forest protection as well as restoration.

c) Funding mechanisms are varied, complex and confusing, which thereby hinders MGs and communities that depend on forests from accessing funds for SFM.

d) Many big forestry-related industrial enterprises are often not sustainable, particularly from the social and environmental perspectives, and they provide limited support for economic wellbeing of local communities.

e) Good governance at all levels, from national to local, from government to non-government, is crucial not just to attract funding, but to build credibility and efficiency of SFM initiatives.

f) Diversity of funding options, the creation of adaptive capacities, and responsiveness to emerging issues all play an integral part in ensuring sufficient funding mechanisms to meet the needs of SFM and communities who rely on the forests for their survival. Funding of a diversity of interests, from dialogue and policy development to implementation and "on the ground" initiatives, is also key to SFM.

g) There are many opportunities and initiatives nations and communities can undertake that do not require substantial, or any, funding assistance from donors. For example, instituting volunteer programs.

Recommendations

44. The following recommendations were made:

a) The UNFF should set up a strategic trust fund for SFM, which will play a catalytic role to leverage other sources of funding. The new UN body on forests should set up modalities for contributing monies to this strategic trust fund. Seed money from the strategic trust fund should be made available for developing countries to develop their implementation actions.

b) Establish national funds for SFM that can be borne out of mechanisms, such as taxation from forestry related industries, and ensure that the funds are allocated for SFM implementation, capacity-building and technology transfer.

c) Create a financial clearing house of all existing funds on forests to assist in implementing SFM in developing countries. This includes funds not necessarily earmarked specifically for SFM but which have intrinsic ties to forests, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Capacity-building on understanding these funding mechanisms is also required, to provide clarity and accessibility to all stakeholders, and to reduce often lengthy and poorly streamlined application processes and negotiations.

d) The Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) need to simplify their procedures to be more accessible and accountable. The Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF) Fund needs to

establish a clear and transparent mechanism to enable both government and relevant stakeholders to access the fund.

e) Industrial enterprises and businesses that benefit both directly and indirectly from forests and forestry services need to be required to invest a large proportion of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding into SFM initiatives.

3. Topic 3: Enhancing the engagement of Major Groups participation in the UNFF process

Guiding questions

45. The following five questions were posed to guide discussions:

a) Why do we need an effective MG engagement?

b) Why is the current MG engagement not effective?

c) What are the good elements of the current MG engagement?

d) What conclusions can you draw from your understanding of the current MG engagement in the UNFF process?

e) What suggestions do you have for future MG engagement in the new UN body?

Narrative summary and highlights

46. The forest is not only the domain of government but of the peoples and so, for effective SFM, the involvement of all stakeholders is not only needed, but required, when making decisions on forests. Effective MGs engagement is essential as MGs are best positioned to ensure respect for human rights in the policy process; to keep a close watch on decision-making to ensure an inclusive and transparent process; to advocate on behalf of forest stakeholders, particularly communities, as a safeguard against potential negative impacts of international forest initiatives; and to serve as a feedback mechanism and provide interactions in both the top-down and bottom-up processes. They bring diverse perspectives on forests across all sectors, including the perspectives of marginalized voices often neglected at national levels, that range from forest conservation to the extraction of forest resources, and from economic, environmental, social, cultural and spiritual perspectives, all of which are crucial for SFM. MGs also bring legitimacy, collaborations, partnerships and networks that can assist the UNFF to implement actions at regional, national and local levels. And at both the local and national levels, MGs are able to translate what's happening into language that people understand.

47. The effectiveness of MGs engagement is currently hindered by a lack of clear institutional or financial mechanisms for mobilization, coordination and capacity-building; a fragmented, inconsistent communications strategy between MGs as well as a predominantly one-way communication to MGs from the UNFF processes; and the challenges for MGs to build collective consensus and agendas at the regional and international levels. As well, MGs are not collectively reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses. Within the UN system, many governments are not embracing the Agenda 21's provision of MGs engagement and don't understand the value and role of MGs. MGs status is limited to being observers; they can only give

recommendations that may be watered down or even disappear entirely from reports because they have no decision-making capacity in the discussions; and often do not have access to financial resources.

48. The establishment of MGPoF has developed an increased capacity, effectiveness and coordination for MGs in the UNFF process. Its efforts have led directly to the provision of constructive MGs inputs into UNFF processes; a platform for participants' sharing of experiences; a knowledge base on UNFF processes so MGs are better able to participate; an unprecedented agreement whereby Major Groups-Led Initiative reports and joint papers become official UNFF documents; and a growing recognition by many governments that MGPoF is the MGs stakeholder coordination in the UNFF. MGs involvement in side events and intersessional activities that create an environment of engagement have also increased.

Conclusions

49. Discussions on effective MGs engagement, and its current achievements and challenges, led to the following conclusions:

a) MGs engagement is crucial to ensuring that all perspectives, aspirations and voices are considered in the UNFF process. They also play a critical role in implementation, reporting and monitoring to fill the gaps between the global and local processes.

b) During UNFF processes, cooperation and coordination among MGs has drastically improved. For example, MGI Workshops to provide constructive inputs and guidance to the UNFF processes; and MG joint papers that become official UNFF documents. Many governments recognize the importance of MGs and are willing to explore how this could be enhanced.

c) Interventions of MGs have been watered down and sometimes are not reflected in the final reports and decisions. That limits the role of the MGs to "really" engage and have "real" dialogue and "real" discussions instead of just being a tokenism that does not reflect rightfully or recognize the contributions that the MGs have made in the UNFF processes.

d) While there were good intentions for establishing UNFF within ECOSOC, its rules and status limits the ability of MGs to be fully engaged and inhibits the mobilization of other relevant civil society groups in the UNFF process.

e) Currently, there are no incentives for the Major Group of Business and Industry to engage with other MGs.

f) The interest and commitment of MGs to participate in both the policy dialogue and in the implementation of the recommendations of the UNFF is strong.

Recommendations

50. The following recommendations were made:

a) Recognize MGPoF as a legitimate coordinating body for Major Groups involvement in UNFF processes; grant it official Permanent Observer Status in the post-UNFF process; and make MGs true partners.

b) At the global, regional and national levels, any working groups, task forces, delegations or other mechanisms addressing SFM issues must have MGs representation to ensure their meaningful, full and effective engagement. Involve MG representatives in policy development, planning, implementation, reviews and other important decision-making processes.

c) Financial support for MGs involvement in post-UNFF processes must be increased. This should include core funding for MGPoF.

d) MGPoF should be granted the status of Observer on the CPF, and a cooperation and collaboration mechanism between CPF and MGPoF should be supported.

e) MGs should have representation on the governing body on the new UN institution.

f) An independent mechanism for registering MGs wishing to participate in a session should be created to avoid the limitations imposed by following the ECOSOC accreditation process.

g) Communications within, and from, the UNFF Secretariat need to be strengthened, particularly with regards to understanding and championing the role of MGs.

Key recommendations (communiqué)

51. The participants in the workshop issued a communiqué in which they underscored the contributions that sustainable management of forests can make in overcoming the crises of climate change, water shortages and loss of diversity. They also highlighted the importance of the active involvement of civil society groups in seeking and implementing solutions to the local and global crises we all face. The communiqué then outlined 6 of the key conclusions and 9 of the key recommendations that were agreed upon at the Workshop. The full communiqué is appended as an Annex and is also available at www.mgp-forests.org.

Closing ceremony

52. The official closing ceremony was held on the afternoon of Friday, 6 March 2015. Mr. Lambert Okrah officially commenced the ceremony by reading the workshop communiqué (see para. 51 above) for the assembled delegates and journalists. Following the presentation of the communiqué, the MGs were encouraged to continue in earnest their work in contributing to the UNFF. Participants were also reminded that this workshop was simply one step in an important ongoing journey.

53. Representing the Workshop's Organizing Committee, Mr. Joseph Cobbinah, Chair of the Board of MGPoF, formally thanked the Government of Nepal for hosting the workshop, Mr. Ghan Shyam Pandey and his staff for their administrative and organizational support, and the German Government for sponsoring. He also expressed deep gratitude to the UNFF Secretariat and ITTO for their administrative support, to the hospitality of the Nepalese people and to all the participants for their meaningful contributions to the success of the workshop. Mr. Cobbinah closed by thanking Lambert Okrah for his contributions and leadership, without whom the workshop would not have been realized.

54. In the official closing address by Mr. Sharad Chandra Paudel, Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal shared his appreciation of the scope and scale of the workshop, and of the work undertaken and outcomes that resulted. In particular, he was pleased that everyone had had the opportunity to visit several Community Forest projects and have first-hand experience seeing how Nepalese people are engaged in the management of forests and SFM. Mr. Paudel stressed that we need to highlight and champion the interdependence of the sustainable use of forests and development, not only for the UN system's realization of the SDGs, but also to ensure the continued subsistence of humans around the world. He assured the participants that, as the hosting country, Nepal will submit the final report to the UN Secretary-General so that the recommendations will be given the serious considerations they deserve during UNFF11. He wished the participants a safe trip home, and hoped they enjoyed their stay in Kathmandu.

55. The workshop was officially closed with short closing remarks by Mr. Lambert Okrah who thanked all participants, and in particular, the focal points and organizing committee who worked hard for a successful event. After wishing everyone a safe journey back, and a reminder that UNFF11 is where the work really begins, he declared the workshop officially closed.

Annex 1

Communiqué on a Major Groups Workshop developing recommendations for UNFF11

6 March 2015

From 2-6 March, 2015, Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPoF), the coordinating organization of Major Groups involved in the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) process, organized a five day international workshop, hosted by the government of Nepal, on one of the major issues of our time: Sustainable Forests Management.

Climate change, water shortages for drinking and irrigation, and loss of biodiversity are huge challenges for our planet Earth. Sustainable management of forests can make a big contribution to overcoming these crises.

As part of our five-day conference, we visited three Community Forests here in Nepal where we saw for ourselves how local communities are restoring forests, increasing water supplies and protecting wildlife.

Civil society in Nepal includes many representatives of Major Groups. Many are essential participants in the work of the Community Forests we visited. They are demonstrating the importance of the active involvement of women, youth, small farmers and local authorities with support from scientific research institutions, labour and environmental organizations.

Without the leadership of the communities and the support of government and other organizations, the benefits from sustainable forest management would not happen. We saw this for ourselves here in Nepal. We can tell you this is also true around the world. When civil society groups are actively involved, there are solutions to the local and global crises we all face.

The workshop brought together 76 participants from 36 countries representing the following 8 of the 9 official Major Groups identified by the United Nations: Women; Children and Youth; Scientific and Technological community; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); Indigenous Peoples; Workers and Trade Unions; Farmers and Small Forests Landowners; and Local Authorities.

The theme of the workshop was "*Sustainable Forest Management: Designing the Vehicles for Securing the Means of Implementation*". Discussions focused on three themes: the new United Nations body for Sustainable Forests Management (SFM); financial mechanisms for undertaking SFM; and enhancing the engagement of Major Groups participation in the UNFF process.

Under the first theme of a new global body for SFM, to replace the UNFF that will soon be concluding its mandate, participants concluded that:

- The UNFF's placement within ECOSOC has led to a rich dialogue that resulted in more than 270 recommendations, but it does not provide scope or capacity for implementation. The present hierarchy and complexity within ECOSOC at the divisional level hinders decision-making as bureaucracy is very high. Major Groups want to see more focus on implementation of the forest instrument and goals on forests.

- There is a lack of ownership of UNFF recommendations, as seen in some of the language used that asks Parties to "consider" and "encourage" but does not call on Parties to "commit". With clauses of "national limitations and territorial sovereignty" the Parties are more reluctant to take on recommendations that might be too ambitious.

and made the following recommendations:

- We propose a new multi-stakeholder UN Forest Organization, not under ECOSOC, that addresses both policy and implementation, and that will deal with forestry issues in a coordinated and holistic manner at the global, regional, national and local levels.
- The issue of forests is included in several of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, goals 6, 15 and 17). The new UN body on forests should be responsible for the high political level dialogue on SDGs on forest related issues, including the review of policies and the establishment of dedicated funds to implement its work on the ground. The new body should also be responsible for coordinating all institutions and mechanisms engaged on forest issues within the UN.
- Major Groups need to be part of the governing structure of the new UN body on forests.

For the second theme of financial mechanisms for undertaking SFM, participants concluded that:

- The lack and inconsistencies of funding mechanisms reflect the lack of political willingness among the governments to prioritize SFM. As a result, funding for SFM is not only extremely fragmented but the existing funding mechanisms emphasize more on economic value and less on the conservation, cultural and social value of forests.
- A large proportion of existing funds have been spent in bureaucratic processes, leaving less funds available for the implementation of SFM. This makes it difficult for communities to get fair compensation for their efforts in forest protection as well as restoration.

and made the following recommendations:

- The UNFF should set up a strategic trust fund for SFM, which will play a catalytic role to leverage other sources of funding. The new UN body on forests should set up modalities for contributing monies to this strategic trust fund. Seed money from the strategic trust fund should be made available for developing countries to develop their implementation actions.
- Establish national funds for SFM that can be borne out of mechanisms, such as taxation from forestry related industries, and ensure that the funds are allocated for SFM implementation, capacity-building and technology transfer.
- Create a financial clearing house of all existing funds on forests to assist in implementing SFM in developing countries.

On the issue of enhancing the engagement of Major Groups participation in the UNFF process, participants concluded that:

- During UNFF processes, cooperation and coordination among Major Groups has drastically improved. For example, workshops to provide constructive inputs and guidance to the UNFF processes; and Major Group joint papers that become official UNFF documents. Many governments recognize the importance of Major Groups and are willing to explore how this could be enhanced
- Interventions of Major Groups have been watered down and sometimes are not reflected in the final reports and decisions. That limits the role of the Major Groups to "really" engage and have "real" dialogue and "real" discussions instead of just being a tokenism that does not reflect rightfully or recognize the contributions that the Major Groups have made in the UNFF processes;

and made the following recommendations:

- Recognize MGPoF as a legitimate coordinating body for Major Groups involvement in post-UNFF processes. Give MGPoF official Permanent Observer Status in the post-UNFF process; and make Major Groups true partners in the full process of the realization of actions.
- At the global, regional and national levels, any working groups, task forces or other mechanisms addressing SFM issues must have Major Groups representation to ensure their meaningful, full and effective engagement. Involve Major Groups representatives in review processes and other important decision-making processes.
- Financial support for Major Groups involvement in post-UNFF processes should be increased. This should include funds for the MGPoF to do its work and successfully implement its institutional goals.

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